

LAUNCH OF THE 2025/2026 TERTIARY EDUCATION FINANCING SPONSORSHIP CYCLE

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Salutations

1. I stand before you today with immense pride and joy to deliver my first launch of the 2025/2026 sponsorship cycle under the new UDC-Led Government! I am overjoyed for we are today giving our youngsters a key to securing their future by giving them the opportunity to apply for Government Tertiary Education Financing to further their education for a brighter future.

2. Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, it is common cause that tertiary education financing is one of the key Government priorities. The 2025/26 budget allocation emphasizes improving the quality of life through investments in education, health and social welfare. In this connection, these areas/sectors have been allocated a significant proportion of the budget compared to other Ministry budget provisions. This is indeed demonstration of the value, the Botswana Government attaches to human resource development.

3. For the financial year 2025/26, the budget allocation for tertiary education financing is P3, 080, 647, 010 (Three billion and eighty million, six hundred and forty-seven thousand and ten Pula). This allocation is in alignment with Pillar one (1) of the national Vision 2036 of Sustainable Economic Development, in particular the sub-themes of a Knowledge Based Economy and Human Capital Development. I need not emphasize that Botswana aspires for an economy that is “vibrant, efficient, innovative and knowledge based with access to a skilled and internationally competitive workforce.” You will agree with me that we can only achieve this by investing in our young ones through education.

4. Director of Ceremonies, allow me to make the following important announcements;

a. Today, Wednesday the 2nd July 2025 the Student Loan Management System will be switched on for New Students to apply for tertiary financing sponsorships.

b. Sponsorship is self-placement at different approved and accredited ETPs.

c. We will receive applications effective immediately up to and including the 31st July 2025, which shall be the closing date.

d. This year, the Ministry has budgeted and will sponsor only one sponsorship category being New Students.

e. A limited number of 50 students will be sponsored for progression.

f. Unfortunately, re-sponsorship will not be considered. We acknowledge the outstanding re-sponsorship applications of around 4641 clients who are eligible and require re-sponsorship for the years 2003 going backwards.

g. Aviation related programmes particularly commercial pilot licence causes will not be considered due to oversupply.

h. We are reviewing top achievers program with the view to discontinue it.

i. A total of 12, 034 (twelve thousand and thirty-four) new students comprising of fresh applicants and upgrades in BGCSE as well as IGSCE will be awarded sponsorship. In the previous year, the Ministry sponsored a total of 10 180 (Ten thousand, one hundred and Hundred and forty-one).

j. Summary; Out of 36911 students, 36 to 48 points to be sponsored are – 7842. 31 to 35 points are – 1500 out of 5240. Less than 30 points are – 25779. Upgrades are 3494.

k. Currently we have a total of 40 890 students sponsored by government across the 54 local ETPs.

l. The cut-off point for sponsorship is maintained at 36 points for the mainstream applicants.

m. In the same vein and in fulfilment of the Government policy on Orphans and Destitute, the Remote Area Development Programme and the Affirmative Action Framework of inclusiveness, my Ministry has mainstreamed special dispensation initiatives into sponsorship programming. Therefore, the orphaned and vulnerable, those residing in remote and difficult to reach areas, as well as those with special educational needs, will be accommodated with five points less than the ordinary cut off point, meaning their cut-off point too will be maintained at 31 points. This is also in fulfilment of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 which encourages Governments to ensure “equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations”.

n. In order to reduce human intervention, the sponsorship applications will be processed through the online or e-services platform of the Student Loan Management System. You will recall that the Ministry developed the e-services platform in the year 2020 and this platform continues to serve our clients well. I hasten to point out that the development and implementation of the online service platform has greatly enhanced operational efficiency. We now are able to process applications for all the 12 836 applicants within a period of one month as opposed to the previous 4 months.

o. Response to New Student application will be given immediately. On average, an individual application is processed within 60 minutes including generation of the sponsorship letter.

p. Further, access to tertiary education financing services has been greatly improved as students will apply for from the comfort of their homes without the hassle to travel to Gaborone or other major centers to submit their applications as was the case before.

q. Applicants must take responsibility to make and submit applications and avoid third parties. We understand that some may not have resources required to apply but must take full responsibility for their applications.

r. As pronounced during the Committee of Supply speech in March 2025, this academic year, we will not be able to adjust student allowances to P2, 500.00 in line with the UDC manifesto due to financial considerations. This does not however mean that the idea of adjusting student allowances for tertiary education has been abandoned.

s. That notwithstanding, I do confirm that with effect from August 2025, student allowances will be increased from P300.00 to align with the current allowances for other tertiary students.

t. Pick-ups will only be limited to local students who have improved their points in alignment with those set by the Ministry. No international pick-ups will be considered.

5. There are some programs that are oversubscribed; Finance, Business, Management etc. Students are encouraged to explore other programs.

6. Director of Ceremonies, globally, there are future skills and future jobs — Let me take this opportunity to encourage you our applicants to inform themselves on future skills and future jobs so that you make informed choices on their programmes of study. This will enable you to be productive in both the local and the world economy upon completion of your studies.

7. For example, some of the current workplaces and production companies use robotics and artificial intelligence — this is a major feature which characterizes the fourth industrial revolution. Currently, the world is also championing the green economy.

8. Likewise, let me encourage the Education and Training Providers to respond accordingly regarding future jobs, which will particularly produce entrepreneurs. The ETPs are encouraged to pro-actively develop programmes that take cognizance of these new trends of future jobs and skills to benefit our youth.

9. Further, our graduands should be empowered for self-employment and for production. Entrepreneurship and job creation are at the centre of progressive world economies in an increasingly a globalized world.

10. Repayment of loans currently standing at 51 percent.

11. Director of Ceremonies, it is now my singular honour and privilege to on behalf of Government of Botswana and that of my Ministry of Higher Education, to officially switch on the 2025/2026 sponsorship cycle.

12. I wish all applicants the best in their application endeavors.

I thank you.

Pula Bagaetsho!!!! Pula!!!! Pula!!!